



## **Request for search for Divorce Decree Absolute**

### **What is the Central Index of Decrees Absolute?**

The Central Index is a record of all decrees absolute granted by Courts in England and Wales since 1858. It is kept and controlled by the Central Family Court and anyone is entitled to apply for a search to be carried out, and to receive a certificate of the result and any decree absolute traced.

People may wish to apply for a search of the Central Index for a number of reasons, the most common of which are:-

- To obtain a copy of their decree absolute, if they have lost the original and no longer have a record of the case details
- To find out whether they have been divorced, following a long separation from their spouse
- To find out whether a friend or relative has been divorced
- To help trace a family tree or other historical reasons.

### **How do I apply for a search?**

To apply for a search you will need to complete a Form D440 and send it to:

Central Family Court  
Decree Absolute Search Section  
First Avenue House  
42 – 49 High Holborn  
London WC1V 6NP

Tel: 020 7421 8594 (switchboard)

This form can be obtained from any family court office or from our website [hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk](http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk). If you attend in person, the counter staff will not be able to carry out a search of the index while you wait. In such cases, the result of the search will be sent to you at the address provided on your application form.

## How much will it cost?

The fee for a 10 year search of the central index is £65.00. This fee includes a copy of the agreement made, if appropriate. Please note this fee is subject to change. For an up to date list of court fees please refer to leaflet **EX50 - Civil and Family court fees**. You can get a copy from any family court office or from our website at: [hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk](http://hmctsformfinder.justice.gov.uk). If you're paying by cheque, please make it payable to 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service'.

**Please note:** Fee remissions are no longer available for copy documents or duplicate documents.

## How do I fill in Form D440?

Form D440 is attached. You should try to answer as many of the questions as you can. At the very least, the court requires the full names of both parties to the marriage, and great care should be taken to ensure that the names are spelt correctly. An incorrect spelling may result in an unsuccessful search!

Once you have completed the form, you should send it to the Central Family Court together with the appropriate fee to the address above.

## What do I receive?

If everything is in order, you will receive a certificate of the search.

If there is anything wrong with your application, it will be returned to you with a letter giving the reason for its return.

In the case of a successful search where the divorce proceedings are found to have taken place in the Central Family Court, you will also receive with your certificate a 'sealed' or 'sealed and certified copy' of the decree absolute.

If the divorce took place other than at this court, you will be notified of the name of the court and the case number, and we will write to that court, on your behalf, to instruct them to send you a copy of the decree absolute.

A sealed and certified copy will only be supplied if you state in your application that the decree absolute is required in connection with matters outside of England and Wales.

If there is no trace of a decree having been granted, you will be issued with a 'no trace' certificate.

**Please Note** – The Central Family Court does not keep any document in relation to cases issued in another court, it simply holds a record of any decrees absolute granted by them. If, therefore, you require a copy of a decree absolute and already know the case number and name of the court which granted the decree, you should write direct to that court with the relevant fee for a copy thereof and for any other information you may require.

## General Information

If you are submitting your documents by post please address them to:

Central Family Court  
Decree Absolute Search Section  
First Avenue House  
42 – 49 High Holborn  
London WC1V 6NP  
  
Tel: 020 7421 8594 (switchboard)

You can obtain information about the court, its facilities and a location map from [courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk](http://courtribunalfinder.service.gov.uk)

## Request for search for Divorce Decree Absolute

**To help us make the search please answer as many of the questions below as you can.**

1. Full name of the applicant (the person who issued the proceedings)

2. Full name of the respondent (the person who replied to the proceedings)

- 3. Full name of the co-respondent (if any) or any other person named in the divorce**

4. Date of marriage

--

- 5. Date of separation**

--

6. Date or year the petition was filed

--	--

7. The Registry where it was filed

- 8. Date or year the decree nisi was pronounced**

\_\_\_\_\_

9. The court where it was pronounced

- 10. Date or year the decree nisi was made absolute**

\_\_\_\_\_

I request that a search be made between the years

\_\_\_\_\_

and

\_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service' for £

\_\_\_\_\_

Your name (or Company name and reference)

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

Postcode

Contact telephone number  
(we may need to clarify details)

[illegible]

Solicitors for (if applicable)

--

**Return this completed form with your fee to:**

Central Family Court, Decree Absolute Search Section, First Avenue House,  
42 – 49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP